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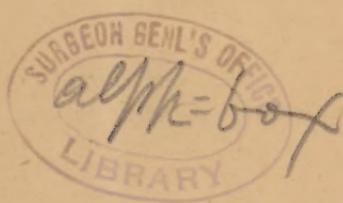
The Woman's Hospital.

ANNIVERSARY ADDRESS,

BY

J. MARION SIMS, M. D.

NOVEMBER 17, 1868.



THE WOMAN'S HOSPITAL.

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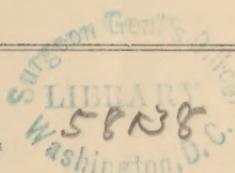
WOMAN'S HOSPITAL,

CORNER OF FOURTH AVENUE AND FIFTIETH STREET, NEW YORK,
NOVEMBER 17TH, 1868.

BY

J. MARION SIMS, M.D.,

SENIOR CONSULTING SURGEON TO THE
HOSPITAL, &c.



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MR. PRESIDENT, LADIES OF THE BOARD OF SUPERVISORS, AND GENTLEMEN OF THE BOARD OF GOVERNORS OF THE WOMAN'S HOSPITAL:

Ever since the foundation of the Woman's Hospital we have been accustomed to work together harmoniously, each having some particular function to perform, and we have all been striving, individually and collectively, to do our utmost for the promotion of the great objects of our organization. Unity of purpose has bound us together by ties as strong and as indissoluble as are those of family itself. Indeed, we are one great united family, and this is the occasion of our annual Thanksgiving.

Now, what would any of you reasonably expect of a son or a brother, on his return to you at such a time as this, after a long absence? Why, the first cordial greeting over, you would expect him to sit quietly down amongst you, while you all indulged in a confidential, familiar, old-fashioned talk.

You would first tell him all about family affairs. You would tell him of all the changes that had occurred. You would tell him of all your ups and downs in business, while he was away from you. And then you

would expect him, in return, to give you an account of his travels, and to tell you all he had seen and done during his long sojourn abroad.

Now, this is just what I propose on this occasion. Let us, then, for a moment, compare notes.

But before beginning this pleasant interchange, let us look around and see if all are present. . . . Ah! Ladies, where is your first Directress, Mrs. David Codwise, whose firmness of purpose and great executive ability, whose gentleness of manner and kindness of heart, and whose tender, watchful, motherly training, were all so important to the early years of this your cherished offspring? And where is that other good and efficient co-worker, Mrs. Mason? And where is your first President, the learned, wise, good, venerable, beloved Dr. Francis, the firm friend, the eloquent advocate of the Woman's Hospital? And where is the great Valentine Mott, who was so aptly styled "The Napoleon of American surgery"? And where is your Treasurer, Joseph B. Collins, whose name is identified with so many noble charities and to whose faithful services we owe so much? And where is Dr. Horace Green, who was one of the first to aid our cause? And where are those other noble-hearted philanthropists, the Hon. Mr. McLenahan, Robert B. Minturn, and Judge Bonney? My friends, it seems that death has made sad havoc in our ranks. These changes were gradual, and you are now accustomed to them. But they have come suddenly upon me, and I am overwhelmed with sorrow. These noble spirits have passed away from amongst us, full of years, of honors, and of usefulness. But while we mourn their loss, and would recall their virtues and good deeds, let us not forget to be thankful that their places have been filled by others who are in every way worthy to follow in their footsteps, and who will emulate their praiseworthy example in devoting their time and services to the same great purposes. With a holy reverence, then, for the memory of our sainted dead, let us now turn and look at the results of their labors while living.

To inquire into the results of their labors is but to recount what you have been doing since last we met.

When I left you, now more than six years ago, you were occupying your little temporary Hospital in Madison Avenue. Now I find you in this beautiful edifice, an edifice worthy the name of WOMAN'S HOSPITAL. I am delighted to see that it is exactly what we intended it should be; that it is precisely what we all agreed to make it. So far you have carried out your original plan to the letter.

This solitary Pavilion, but a moiety of what we intend to make it,

is, even as it now stands, quite an ornament to our city, and an honor to our State; and it is also an enduring monument of the munificence of our people. Where every thing has been so well done, all deserve credit. But when we come to speak of the few who have so ably carried out the plans and wishes of the many, we can hardly find words to express our grateful thanks to your president, your building committee, and your architect. I have examined every nook and corner of your building from top to bottom, and I can truly say, that, since your late improvements, I cannot find a single thing I would have changed, or that could now be improved. Taken altogether, it is one of the finest Hospitals I have seen, either abroad or at home. Indeed, it is simply a splendid hotel for sick women, and if you were disposed to change its name, you might very properly call it THE PALACE HOSPITAL. What hopes, what fears, what anxieties, have been the lot of those amongst you who have had the responsibility of carrying forward this noble enterprise, can be known only to you who have experienced these things. But you now have your reward in realizing the full fruition of your happy efforts. Well and nobly have you all done your duty, and the work accomplished here daily is a living witness of your industry, zeal, liberality, and far-seeing philanthropy.

And whence came this splendid institution? Ladies of the Board of Supervisors, we owe it to you—for without you we could have done nothing. By uniting our efforts with yours, we obtained from the city of New York the magnificent block of ground which we now occupy. By a like united action, we obtained fifty thousand dollars from the State, and a hundred thousand dollars from our generous fellow citizens. Thus it will be seen that city, State, and citizens, have all contributed liberally to assist us. Truly have we begged to some purpose, and for a glorious purpose; and we expect to continue begging city, State, and citizens, as long as the good work continues to need aid; and that it does need aid is manifest by the report you have just heard read.

Your Hospital now contains about seventy-five beds. At least fifty of these ought to be free. But unfortunately we are not as yet able to give more than twenty-five free beds to the city. This is not as it ought to be. It is not as it must be. It is not as it shall be! We must have more money. And I am sure we can get it by asking for it. I have come home to remain here permanently, and to aid you in raising what is so greatly needed. We have never yet appealed to our people in vain. They are ever ready to help a worthy cause. I am hopeful and sanguine, and I expect yet to see the day when this Hospital shall have an endow-

ment amply sufficient to permit us to throw its wards freely open without money and without price, to any woman who may need its aid.

In Boston no respectable man of fortune ever thinks of dying without remembering in his will good old Harvard or some charitable institution. It is the fashion to do so. Let the rich here make it fashionable to remember the Woman's Hospital in their wills, and a generation will not pass away before it will be where many of us (who unfortunately are not rich) would place it at once, if we only had the means. Let no rich man dare to die amongst us without giving munificently to some of our great charities. I do not say give only to the Woman's Hospital. Oh, no! But I say let no man sleep a night without a codicil to his will, giving something commensurate with his fortune to charity in some form or other.

And now, my friends, having prepared this beautiful temple, let us ask ourselves if it serves our expectations in giving relief to suffering and in advancing science? How better can we answer this than by reference to the labors of your Medical Board. When your Hospital was opened in 1855, I told the lady managers that many diseases then incurable would by it be rendered curable, that it would confer benefits not only on its own immediate inmates, but that it would become a centre of instruction for medical men, a source of improvement to all, and a great and shining light for the diffusion of a knowledge of the diseases herein treated. When the Hospital had been in operation two or three years, when you had all become familiar with its good works, I remember now how impatient some of you were because I did not publish something to catch the public eye and direct it to your favorite Institution. Now, how is it? Look yourselves at its beneficent working. Your out-door department, under the direction of Dr. Clymer and Dr. Brown, offers all the facilities of such an important service, and you daily witness its beneficial results. But it is amongst those unfortunate poor women who are lucky enough to gain admission as in-door patients, that you can see and fully realize the great good here accomplished. You see here a class of patients that you do not meet with in other hospitals. We have always made tolerably good provision for the wretchedly poor. But never till the Woman's Hospital was organized, had we any place where educated and cultivated women could go for relief when they had not the means to command it.

No lady is degraded by entering the Woman's Hospital as a patient. Look at its records and you will find that it has given shelter, health, and life as it were, to the wives and daughters of clergymen, of lawyers, of

doctors, of merchants' clerks, of merchants who have been unfortunate in business, of college professors, of teachers, of druggists, of artists, of farmers, of mechanics, and many others of respectability and culture. A young man on a salary has a poor, sick wife :—His family physician says to him: “Your wife’s case is peculiar,—it is delicate,—it is difficult; but it can be cured. I have not the facilities for performing the necessary operation, but if she could go to New York she might be cured in a short time.” “But,” says the husband, “I can’t afford it—my salary will not permit me to send my poor, suffering wife to the city, and to place her in a boarding house or hotel, and then employ a great city doctor.” “But,” replies his physician, “send her to the Woman’s Hospital and she will have the services of its medical officers without a cent’s cost, paying only for board, according to circumstances.” The honest physician not accustomed to perform the operations that are done here almost daily, is too glad to know that there is such an institution as the Woman’s Hospital, where he can send his respectable patient of modest means, with the hope, nay, almost with the certainty, of seeing her return soon to the bosom of her little family, prepared to fulfil again the responsible duties of wife and mother.

And who are the medical men so easily commanded by this poor, sick woman? Let me read their names to you. Your consulting physicians are John T. Metcalf, Edward Delafield, Thomas F. Cock, Isaac E. Taylor, Gustavus A. Sabine, T. G. Thomas, Fordyce Barker, Charles A. Budd.

Your consulting surgeons are W. H. Van Buren, Geo. A. Peters, Gurdon Buck, Thos. M. Markoe, Alfred Post, E. R. Peaslee, and Geo. T. Elliot. Why, such a galaxy of obstetrical and surgical talent was hardly ever before claimed by any one hospital; and there is not a man amongst them who is not glad to be called upon to render his aid when needed. And, besides these, you have your daily working staff: Dr. Emmet, principal surgeon; Dr. Perry and Dr. Swift, assistant surgeons; and Dr. Hunter and Dr. De Wolfe, resident physicians, all ably and worthily filling their respective positions. And now, in this connection, will you allow me to say a word of your surgeon, Dr. Emmet, and I do it only to show you the extent of your own charitable labors.

You know him as well as I do, for he has been with you almost from the very foundation of your Hospital, and I am sure I could say nothing of him individually that would make you love and trust him more. He has worked with a will to carry out your wishes in all things. He has

been ever attentive to your requests, and ever watchful of the honor of your Institution. He has liberally thrown it open to the profession on all proper occasions. He has stood by you under all circumstances, whether prosperous or discouraging. He has been ready to do your bidding at all hours and all seasons. Indeed, the amount of work he has done is stupendous; and we are all ready to acknowledge the fact that he is the right man in the right place. His monograph, recently published, fills up a hiatus in our medical literature, and exhibits the beautiful results of some of the great operations performed here. It contains the reports of cases and operations, performed in the Woman's Hospital, showing a degree of patience, perseverance, mechanical ingenuity, and surgical ability, hardly to be found elsewhere in the annals of surgery. I am sure Dr. Emmet will excuse me for saying all this here before a non-professional audience. It is not done with the view of puffing him—he does not need it; but it is in answer to the question we asked a little while ago in reference to the benefits resulting from your labors in establishing this Hospital. It is to show you that while the Hospital answers the immediate purpose of relieving individual suffering, it also freely exhibits to the medical profession the means by which all this is accomplished, and thus science is advanced by enabling others in other States and in other countries to profit by our great experience. Let me then congratulate you, ladies and gentlemen, not only on the relief here given to suffering humanity, but also on the light now shed abroad by the teachings of the Woman's Hospital.

Mr. President, I am sure I do not claim too much in saying that the Woman's Hospital and its mission furnish a bright example of the fact that not only peace, but science and philanthropy have

* * * "victories
No less than those of war."

But, the deeds of the warrior and the statesman always receive a readier recognition and higher honors than those of science. Yet they are not always more brilliant or more beneficent. Nor do they always produce more permanent good results. Witness Watt and the steam engine, Fulton and the steamboat. Look at our own immortal Morse and the telegraph, Cyrus W. Field and the Atlantic cable. The great deeds of these illustrious men will live always, and work together for the good of mankind as long as civilization shall last, and yet they were the products of science and of peace.

Now, Mr. President, having heard and seen what you have all been doing, we have only words of commendation and praise for all, amongst

whom we must not forget our worthy matron and our faithful nurses and servants, who have been with us for so many long years.

Having thus briefly glanced at your labors and their results, it is now my turn to tell you what I have been doing since last we met. Indeed, I have no other means of justifying my long absence but by showing you how my time has been occupied. I would willingly leave this to rumor, but I know the interest you all feel in me personally, and it is very natural for you to wish to know whether my labors have at all influenced the progress of science or in any way redounded to the honor of the Woman's Hospital.

When I left you I did not expect to be absent more than four months. I sailed in July, 1862, and, as many of you know, with a return ticket in my pocket to come back to you in the following November. But when I arrived in Europe I met with a welcome that I had not dreamed of. The profession everywhere received me with open arms, for they were anxious to witness the great operations that had made the Woman's Hospital famous—famous not only at home, but famous abroad. Wherever I went, whether in Great Britain or on the Continent, I was invited to demonstrate these operations, either in hospitals or in private practice. The profession had read accounts of them; they had heard that we operated in the Woman's Hospital for a special class of injuries, without danger to life, and with uniform success; while, according to their methods, their patients were seldom or never cured, and sometimes died in consequence of operations. Is it, then, at all surprising that they were anxious to learn the methods adopted at the Woman's Hospital? But when told that we here sometimes cured a dozen cases in succession of these heretofore incurable affections—and that, too, without the least accident—and that every case was curable where there was tissue enough left to justify an attempt at operation, they were very skeptical, particularly in France. Indeed, my friend Dr. Johnston, of Paris, told me that they pronounced such statements mere humbug—American bravado. It was, then, with much interest and great curiosity that they witnessed my first operations in France. And when they saw that they were really successful, they were, as a matter of course, greatly pleased and were ready to adopt our method at once. Many of the cases operated upon were very difficult, and I now call to mind one poor woman who had submitted to more than a dozen operations before I saw her. I had the honor of operating successfully on this case in the Charity Hospital, under the eyes of the great Velpeau. After this, Dr. Johnston says there was no longer a doubt amongst any of them, and then all be-

came more anxious to witness these operations and to learn how to do them—1st, that they might be able to relieve such sufferings as you have all so often seen relieved and permanently cured within the walls of your Hospital—and 2nd, that they might teach their students to go and do likewise. The greatest attention and the greatest kindness were shown me by almost all, and I was invited to demonstrate these operations, first in one hospital and then in another, till I had operated in nine of their great hospitals, viz: In the Hotel Dieu, la Charité, Beaujon, Necker, St. Louis, San Antoine, Cochin, Hopital des Cliniques, and the Municipal Hospital, the Maison DuBois. Besides these, I was frequently called upon to operate in private practice. And all these operations were done at the request and for the benefit of the Great Masters of our art. They were done in the presence of such men as Velpau, Nelaton, Civiale, Baron Larrey, Sir Joseph Olliffe, Gosselin, Huguier, Laugier, Denonvilliers, Verneuil, Follin, Ricord, Chassaignac, Morpain, Richard, Demarquay, Malgaigne, Rayer, and many others of equal renown. You could hardly imagine the interest and anxiety manifested by these great lights of science on this important subject. Their liberality in throwing open their hospitals to a foreigner to introduce new modes and new processes into their practice, was well worthy a noble and enlightened profession. Of course I did not allow any opportunity of displaying the teachings and experience of the Woman's Hospital to pass by unimproved. I was always willing and ever ready to respond to any call made upon me. The operations alluded to were successfully performed. Cases were easily, safely, and quickly cured, that Mr. Nelaton, Baron Larrey, and others, declared to me they had never before seen cured. What was the consequence? Why, these great surgeons were afterwards able to repeat these operations successfully before their pupils, and their pupils now perform them successfully all over the Empire of France, and from Paris this knowledge radiates throughout the world.

Thus you see, a new era in surgery, marked here by the establishment of the Woman's Hospital, was inaugurated in France, for which the French government, ever ready to recognize new discoveries and new inventions, conferred upon me very distinguished honors. These I bring and lay at your feet for they are not mine individually; they belong to the Woman's Hospital in which I gained my experience—and they belong to my country; for, Mr. President, I can with all sincerity say, My country, "with all thy faults I love thee still."

I might here close my narrative. But the teachings and experience of the Woman's Hospital did not stop with the introduction of one great

surgical operation into the Old World. When I was here amongst you and one of you, I was too busy to write. I had no time to publish anything. But I never failed to take notes of important cases, and when I was abroad I classified and arranged these notes, and in 1866 I published them as "A Voice from the Woman's Hospital." In this publication many new operations were described, and some diseases were shown to be curable, the curability of which had been worked out in this Hospital. I have reason to know that this "Voice from the Woman's Hospital" has been heard in every part of Europe, and that it is everywhere quietly revolutionizing methods of practice. I do not take to myself any credit for this; I have been only an apostle to spread abroad the experience of this Institution; and it now seems to me that I ought to have done more and better, when I consider the advantages I have here enjoyed.

To outsiders it may appear odd that I should tell you of all these things. But it may be excused when it is remembered that this is merely a little family talk in a little family circle, and that we are detailing simple facts that no one else could give you—facts, too, that will one day become a part of American Medical History. As a Missionary sent abroad as it were by your organization, it was my duty to make you this report, and I should be sorry indeed, if in aught I have transcended the bounds of propriety. I have done it in all humility—certainly with great diffidence—and I hope with becoming modesty.

One word more. When I came amongst you fifteen years ago, I was in very bad health, almost unknown and wholly friendless. Indeed, I might say in scriptural language, "I was a stranger, and ye took me in ; I was sick, and ye visited me." Now, thank God, I have health and all else I could desire, and how much I owe to you I cannot here express. I know I am thankful, and I am sure you will always find me grateful. When you heard of my return home the other day, you spontaneously and promptly re-elected me one of your Governors and also senior Consulting Surgeon to the Hospital. I have long co-operated with you when you were more in need of my aid than you are now, and I am again ready to give you my assistance in any way you may want it for carrying forward the great object of our organization.

Mr. President, Ladies and Gentlemen, in conclusion, allow me to repeat again to you the acknowledgment of my sincere thanks, which I do with all my heart.

